With Teeth

Posted originally on the Archive of Our Own at http://archiveofourown.org/works/19296712.

Rating:	Mature
Archive Warning:	Graphic Depictions Of Violence
Category:	M/M
Fandom:	Hannibal (TV)
Relationship:	Will Graham/Hannibal Lecter
Characters:	Will Graham, Will Graham's Dogs, Hannibal Lecter, Beverly Katz, Jimmy Price, Abigail Hobbs, Bedelia Du Maurier, Dr. Frederick Chilton
Additional Tags:	Alternate Universe - Creatures & Monsters, Non-Traditional Alpha/Beta/Omega Dynamics, Werewolf Will Graham, Omega Will Graham, Transgender Will Graham, Vampire Hannibal Lecter, Alpha Hannibal Lecter, Meet-Ugly, Misunderstandings, past transphobia, Scenting, Blood Drinking, Enemies? Friends? Lovers? We Just Don't Know, Happy Ending
Language:	English
Collections:	Hannigram A/B/O Big Bang 2019
Stats:	Published: 2019-06-20 Words: 5,356 Chapters: 3/3

With Teeth

by shiphitsthefan

Summary

> “You’re the vampire who walks his pretentious dogs past my house at two in the morning and I’m the werewolf who just wants a good night’s sleep.” Or: a meet-ugly with dogs, banter, and misunderstandings of supernatural proportion.

Notes

> I was up late one night because some asshole was walking his dogs at two in the morning, making my sister's dog bark. "Wouldn't that be an interesting meet-cute prompt?" I thought, and then I decided to write Will as a werewolf, and then to also make him trans, and given all of that, I tossed in omegaverse, too, because why not?
>
> Thanks to all the lovely folks at the Hannigram A/B/O Library for holding this bang! I was paired with the incredible canidayy on twitter, whose art for chapter two is amazing and perfect. Please be sure to retweet the art and support a phenomenal fannibal!
>
> Betaed by Llewcie. I owe you awe, as always. Any further mistakes and ridiculousness are mine and mine alone.
>
> This fic fought me, a *lot,* but I'm unashamedly in love with the universe, so there might be sequels in the future. Regardless, I hope you enjoy this story! <3

See the end of the work for more notes

Chapter 1

Will jerks awake as soon as Buster starts barking, little yapping crescendos just the right side of eardrum perforation. Buster thinks he's far larger than he really is, imagines himself to be a rhinoceros of a pug, posing an actual threat to the asshole who walks his dogs at two in the fucking morning every night.

Every day. Whatever; Will's exhausted.

He scrubs a hand down his face. The realtor should've mentioned the neighborhood's resident egotistical vampire with a superiority complex large enough to make up for both his *and* Will's respectively dwindling populations. Maybe Will deserves it, though, for choosing to move closer to the precinct, and thus to people, and thus to other supernaturals. Blessed Lupercal but Will needs a night—*one night*—of uninterrupted sleep, especially with his heat shift approaching.

Winston begins to bark in poor harmony with his runt of an adopted brother.

Will flops onto his stomach, burying his face into the pillow. In lieu of counting invisible sheep, he marks the remaining four minutes for Sir Vampire Von Douchebag to pass out of sight of his house.

The closer the day—the night?—the *time* of his shift, the more alert Will's dogs become, just as always. They know Will is vulnerable in the days immediately preceding his shift, a pack of three protecting their omegan Alpha. Soon, Buster takes up barking before the neighbor dogs have even turn the corner; Will knows, because he installed cameras. Necessary precautionary measures, no matter what the zombie in charge of the Neighborhood Watch might say.

"We have an alert system for strangers," Chilton told him. "Anyone whose face doesn't match the neighborhood database is catalogued and cross-referenced with the police wanted lists."

"I know that. I *am* the police."

"And rude."

"So eat me."

Needless to say, Will hasn't made any friends since he moved in, but he does know what most of the neighbors look like and what times they make goddamned nuisances of themselves.

Now, however, it's one-thirty-three AM, and Will is certain the vampire—"Dr. Lecter," Chilton said quietly, eyes darting back and forth, "but I didn't tell you."—hasn't even left his foreboding trope of a house yet, the gingerbread monstrosity that looms over the cross-street. Winston howls anyway.

It makes Will's throat itch with the yearning to join him. His skin feels too tight with each breath, his heat shift due any day if the fluidity of his joints is any indication. The truck's packed, thank the She-Wolf; he'll find relief from his constant arousal soon. No more trying to conceal it at work, the burning need to be mounted as he pours over crime scenes, eyes irrevocably drawn to the blood.

One-thirty-five, and Buster starts barking, too, huff-woofing his questions into the night.

One-forty-one, and Will wonders when the old hag on the street behind him will call a noise complaint in to dispatch.

One-fifty-three, and Will's teeth grind together, his jaw seizing with the effort of withholding his instinctual chorus. Will fists his hands in the bedsheets, knuckles popping in and out of place, ears twitching atop his head, every hair of his tail powered by electric current.

Two-fucking-fifteen, and Will's pack is still barking. They never bark after Dr. Lecter and his Afghan Hound and his Akita finally mosey on past the stop sign. Even *Zoe* is barking. Head pounding, Will rolls out of his sweat-drenched bed and stumbles to the open window, leaning onto the frost-jeweled sill.

Dr. Lecter stands beneath the ugly light cast by the street lamp, staring up at Will, his dogs silent and docile at his feet, seemingly ignorant of Will's own and their ruckus.

"Good evening," Lecter says, and Will lets his secondary lenses slide into place across his dry eyeballs. Lecter's fangs are prominent but retracted, so he isn't hungry or, even worse, near the peak of frenzied bloodlust. That would be Will's luck, to move into a neighborhood with a vampire primed for rut.

Will still reflexively scents the air. Never can be too sure of secondary gender, and doesn't he know it.

"I'm an Alpha," offers Lecter, "like all my kind. There's no need to check."

"You must be old," says Will before he can stop and remind himself that he should be yelling. "What with hearing my nose, I mean." He files away the new lore to consider later; not often a vampire offers any information about their species.

"Difficult to miss." Will watches him tilt his head back, sees his nostrils curl, Lecter's eyes closed and lips quirked as if he's savoring some rare treat. "Your natural scent is far nicer than your aftershave."

Will's dogs bark louder.

"Are you stalking me?"

“Nothing of the sort.” Lecter’s voice is so smooth and steady, Will almost believes him. “Merely cataloging the difference between this moment and the odor of the aftershave you typically wear to bed, which I catch on the air during my nightly excursions.”

The edge of the windowsill presses painfully against Will’s breasts. “That doesn’t make it any less creepy, Dr. Lecter.”

“My sincerest apologies,” but he sounds neither the former nor the latter. “And you have the upper hand, I fear.”

“How so?”

“My name.”

“What about it?”

“You know mine, yet I don’t know yours.”

Will snorts. “Some vampire you are if you can’t see ‘Graham’ written on the side of the mailbox.” Watching Lecter’s eyes narrow infinitesimally feels like a victory. “And you don’t need my name. What you *need* is to keep walking—actually, no, what you *need* to do is never walk past here again.”

They listen to Will’s dogs bark for several long moments.

“May I ask why?”

“Can you not *hear* why?”

Lecter smooths the front of his ridiculous suit jacket, brushing flakes of snow from paisley whorls. “It’s hardly a fault of mine that your pack is misbehaved.”

“Did you just insult my—” Will laughs, but hardly means it. “You insulted my dogs. You really are a monster.”

“You hardly have room to talk.” Lecter peers at the side of the mailbox. “We’re all monsters here, Mr. Graham.”

“You know exactly what I meant,” says Will, mouth hurting from the effort of speaking. He’s too close to his heat shift to be this... Well, heated. “But it doesn’t matter whether you do or don’t, because you’re going to keep walking and never ‘accidentally’ smell me from the road or let your pure-breds piss off my mutts ever again.”

“If you can’t control them,” Lecter says coolly, calmly, “then perhaps you aren’t the Alpha male they need.”

Will recoils hard enough to bang the back of his head against the glass. A stalker *and* an asshole *and* a transphobe, because everyone knows there aren’t cis male omegan werewolves. Can’t make it through four mandatory years of dynamic ed *without* learning.

“Nice bigotry there,” Will manages, hoping his voice doesn’t shake. “Just swell. Really appreciated.”

“I’m not sure what you mean.” He sounds genuine; a well-practiced glamour, of course. A vampire’s nose can detect anything. Will’s not buying it.

“Like hell you don’t! Walking by here every night, *smelling* me? How could you *not* know?”

No reply.

“Sneering at me for not being a man *or* an Alpha?” Will continues, trying to keep his voice level, “Or do you not deserve your title, either?”

“You must underst—”

“Walk. On.” Downstairs, the pack stops barking, cut off mid-snarl by the slamming of Will’s window. The streaked ice on the glass matches the trails on Will’s cheeks.

Chapter 2

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Will spends the next morning staring at his face in the mirror of his coffee, more sullen than usual. He's forgone shaving, not only because it's pointless with his heat shift only hours away, but because it provides an extra layer of protection from the world and its cisnormative bullshit. His every day binder would do the same, were it not so painful to wear in his preheat.

He scratches beneath a breast. Maybe he'll qualify for the shifter surgical trials next year and he won't have to deal with the binders, at all. Until then, the wild fur beginning to grow on his chest will have to suffice for cover. At least the hormone therapy shrank his secondary and tertiary teats. Will's especially grateful for that now; two itchy boobs are better than six.

No wonder we're going extinct, Will thinks. *Who'd want to inflict multiple mammaries on anyone?*

Sighing, he pushes away his coffee, long since grown cold. The sun reflects off the snow on the porch rails, and Zoe harumphs for her breakfast in the kitchen. Will needs to bundle all three of the dogs off to Beverly's for her to dog-sit for the weekend.

Instead, he goes inside to make another cup of coffee.

Bleary-eyed, Will finds himself not in his kitchen, but at the dog park, walking his pack through the snow, wearing a half-buttoned henley and a pair of sweatpants. He pats at his face, trying to figure out if he's wearing his glasses, not that they serve a real purpose. Reaching up, Will feels the tips of his ears poking out through the holes of a knit cap. Where the hat came from or why he's even *at* the park, Will doesn't know.

He growls loud enough to startle Buster. Will hates losing time, hates how it gets worse during his preheat, hates his *heat* and his *body* and—

"Hello, Will."

—and Hannibal She-damned Lecter.

It’s difficult to make out the cream checks of Dr. Lecter’s beige suit beneath what looks to be full-length clear plastic coveralls, his shielding against the sun. His hands are covered, too, blue nitrile-gloved, loosely holding his dogs’ leashes. Will can’t summon surprise at seeing a bow-tie collar around the Akita’s caramel-colored neck, the pattern matching that of Lecter’s

own Windsor knot. The full chocolate coat of the Afghan hound showcases a probably designer band the same print and shade of the doctor's suit.

Nauseated, Will glances up.

"That's a horrible hat." Reflexive rudeness, and hadn't Chilton said something about Dr. Lecter finding such behavior unspeakable? Or perhaps he always wears that hint of a smile in situations like this.

"An ushanka," Lecter tells him, "and a comfortable one, at that."

"Thought you couldn't feel the cold." Will can't stop staring; the fur of the cap matches that of the Afghan hound, because of course it does.

"I could say the same to you."

"Yeah, but you probably remember putting yours on. Forgetfulness," he explains when Lecter furrows his brow. "It's a shifting thing. Or maybe it's just a me thing, who knows." Will remembers he doesn't want to talk to Dr. Lecter and adds, "Your hat still looks like a hollowed-out tribble, regardless."

He blinks, slow, reptilian. "Is that also a 'werewolf thing'?"

"It's a *Star Trek* thing." Will keeps running his mouth, apparently helpless to stop. "I'm surprised you don't have two matching hats for your pack."

And Lecter practically *beams,* a peacock with headlights. "We coordinate as often as possible, but they have no need to conceal any exposed scalp, having no vampiric lineage. Cain's gift was bestowed on none but us. Unlucky for some, to be cast from the light of God, but I've always found it rather apt. The curse of a curious Creator."

"She-Wolf, but you're chatty."

"You dislike conversation?"

"I dislike people. Primarily you, at the moment."

"Selective introversion is a common defense mechanism for supernaturals ashamed of their true nature. Do you live in shame, Mr. Graham?"

Zoe barks angrily; Will tries to rein his runaway empathy back in and out of her aura, another side-effect of his heatshift, yet another reason he goes into seclusion during it. Regardless, he's glad he hadn't taken his dogs off their leashes yet.

Lecter watches her, eyes bright with amusement. "So much bark for such a little dog."

"You should see her bite."

"I'd very much like to."

If Will scowls any harder, his lips are going to give up and run away from his face. “Hers is almost as bad as mine,” and he wonders if his gums are actually receding or if he’s already so thirsty that he tastes blood in his mouth.

Dr. Lecter’s fangs seem likewise exposed, but that might only be because he’s grinning, a transfixing, terrifying, *dangerous* expression. “I’d like to see that, too.”

And that’s... An intensely odd thing to say, but Will doesn’t have the opportunity to question him. “Excuse me,” Will says, digging around in the pocket of his sweatpants for his ringing phone. “Work call.”

“I don’t mind.” Dr. Lecter stands, statuesque, endlessly patient.

Will rolls his eyes and swipes the call open. “Agent Graham speaking.”

“Hey, kid. It’s Bev. Bad news.”

“I never expect good news in a call from the precinct.”

Beverly laughs. “You’re lucky you get mandated heat leave—in the not-having-to-deal-with-the-boss today sense, not in the run-away-Simba-and-never-return one.”

“I wish,” says Will, snorting. He catches himself watching Lecter pat his hound’s head. “Fucking weirdo,” he mutters.

“Huh?”

“Long story.” Will’s tail tightens around his waist beneath his shirt. “Anyway, what’s got Jack so worked up?”

“Dragon.”

“I’m sorry, *what?”*

“I know, right? So much for being extinct. It would be exciting if he wasn’t—wait, Jimmy, how did you put it?”

Will holds the phone away from his ear as Jimmy shouts, “Burninating all the peasants and their thatched-roof cottages.”

“Yeah, that. So Jack sent Lass out into the field on her own. I’m sure you remember how well that went last time.”

“Maybe she learned?” hopes Will. Lecter’s Akita huffs and paws at her master’s leg for attention. “Besides, Miriam’s half Promethean. She should be fine.”

“Fireproof isn’t the same as, you know, resistance to *being eaten.”*

Will shrugs. “Point. Unbelievable Jack would send her out alone. I wish I was even close to as stubbornly optimistic as he is.”

“You’re, like, three *times* as stubborn!” Jimmy pauses, then adds, “Could work on the optimism bit, but nobody’s perfect.”

“So this is a courtesy call because…?”

“Duty calls beyond the walls,” Beverly says. “I’m not gonna be able to watch your furbabies.”

Will pinches the bridge of his nose. “Why can’t Brian go?”

“He’s currently a pile of ash in my basement.” There’s a beep on the line, probably Jimmy turning on Beverly’s speakerphone.

“A phoenix?” Dr. Lecter murmurs. “Enforcing the law? How curious.”

“Moulting *two weeks early,”* continues Jimmy, sounding as irritated about his incapacitated mate as Will. “Two weeks! I didn’t even have time to polish his urn!”

Will keeps glaring at Lecter, hoping he has Medusan blood somewhere in his body. “I could leave my key under the mat so you can pick them up later?”

“No can do.” Beverly sighs. “I’ll be lucky to even see the bunk for a few hours’ sleep. Is there no one else who could—”

Lecter clears his throat.

“Nope,” says Will, flicking his ears. “Nobody else. I’ll just take them with me.”

Beverly’s silence is suffocating. “Weren’t there... *Issues* with that last time? Before you moved?”

Will bristles under Dr. Lecter’s intrigued gaze. “I’ll set out enough food and water to last them. Lock them in the cabin and me in the shed. I have enough warning to manage the situation.”

“You don’t have to lock yourself up often, do you?” she asks softly.

He closes his eyes, tries to ignore the sweat rolling down his back. “No,” Will lies.

“I’m sorry to leave you in a lurch like this.”

“It’s okay, really.” More lies, and Will wonders if Dr. Lecter can smell that too, the lying, if he’s perceptive enough to see it written beneath the pain on Will’s face. “Just go tame a dragon for me so I don’t have a mess to clean up when I come back to work.”

They end their conversations as they always do, no matter the situation: promises to take care of themselves, human to supernatural, and a quick but heartfelt goodbye.

Will sinks to sit on the ground, surrounded by three cold, worried noses.

“Are you alright?”

And a cold, worried vampire with his warm, aloof dogs. Will opens his eyes, prepared to lie again—he’s gotten so good at it—but Lecter’s face is painted with such intense concern, Will can’t. His eyes are more amber than red; Lecter seems almost human, knelt down to Will’s level, and it’s more than Will can stand.

“Not really, no,” he admits sullenly. “But you should know, since you eavesdropped.” Even *snarking* hurts.

“Hardly on purpose.”

“Then coincidence follows you as surely as death, Dr. Lecter.”

His smile is inviting, mesmerizing. “I’m not one to believe in coincidence.”

“Fate then.”

“Just so.” Will instinctively flinches when Lecter reaches for his face. The vampire’s fingers curl in on themselves, like he’s caught himself about to steal. “Forgive my over-familiarity. It was not my intention to cross boundaries.”

“Stalking isn’t counted as boundary-crossing?” Will’s lip slips into a smile, but he corrects it.

“Were I stalking you, perhaps.” Lecter still hasn’t dropped his hand, seemingly frozen mid-approach. “I explained last night th—”

“So you always suit up for beekeeping and walk your dogs during the day at the same park I do? Because I’ve never seen you here before.” Will frowns, wiping sweat from his brow. “Unless you’ve been here and I’ve just never seen you.”

“I bring Masamune and Muramasa here on occasion, but today, I’m here to meet m—Will?” Dr. Lecter’s face swims in and out of focus as Will trembles. “Will,” he repeats, “may I check your pupils?”

Will nods, staring off into the distance. Winston whines, and Zoe snaps, and Buster sneezes, and then Lecter’s cool hands are on Will’s overheated face and the world beyond those fingers stops existing, at all.

The doctor keeps his touch clinical, professional, but his voice covers Will like a shock blanket. He wants to curl up in Lecter’s words, whatever they are, because he’s hardly listening to anything but the sweetness of his syllables. Lecter brushes Will’s left ear. Whether intentional or not, Will leans into his palm. It’s been *years* since anyone pet him. The gentle scritching slowly brings the park back into view—rather, a certain concerned honey gaze.

“Do you often experience absence seizures with your shiftings?”

Will nuzzles Lecter’s forearm, too far gone to be embarrassed. “Couple years ago,” he says. “Last one.”

“Nothing to be concerned of, then. Mild, infrequent ones are common, often brought on by stress.” He encourages Will to stand, pulling him up and into the circle of his arms. Will can feel the rumble of Lecter’s voice through his neck, Will’s face tucked against it. Dr. Lecter has no scent beyond the universal pheromones that signal “alpha” and “ancient”. He finds it oddly soothing. “Would you tell me now why you lied to your friend?”

“When?”

“Do you lie often enough to need to ask?”

Whatever spell woven by the hand in his hair begins to fade, replaced by Will’s usual bad mood. “Are you always this irritating, Dr. Lecter, or do you make a special effort for me?”

“Quid pro quo,” he says. “Answer mine, and I’ll answer yours. And please, call me Hannibal.”

“First or second question?”

“Why did you lie about the shed?”

No amount of scritching can unsour the moment. “It’s none of your business!”

“As a physician,” Hannibal begins, and smugness *oozes* off of his words, “your welfare is exactly my business.”

Will snarls, gratified when Hannibal stills entirely. “You want to try and tell your longtime and currently guilt-ridden partner that, yes, the old rumors are true and you could inadvertently *kill and eat someone* if you don’t silver-snare your limbs for five days every four months? Because I sure don’t.”

“Partner.” Hannibal’s hand drops to his side.

“Yeah, Bev’s been my partner for about three y—”

“Yes,” and he pulls away from Will. “Of course.” When Will tries to follow him, Hannibal retreats further, picking up his dogs’ leashes. “Our proximity hardly seems appropriate now, Mr. Graham.”

Whiplash. Utter and devastating whiplash. Will had managed to forget what kind of person he was talking to: a practiced manipulator. His tail bristles as he lunges for Hannibal’s arm.

“I apologize for my presumption, but your behavior is uncalled for.”

“My behav—you played with my ears in a public park and *my* behavior is uncalled for?”

Hannibal opens his mouth to reply, only to be interrupted by the tackling hug of a young girl in a plastic suit of her own. He grins widely, though his eyes are still hard and red. Will misses the amber and hates himself for it.

“Hello, mažylis.” Hannibal strokes her upturned face, then taps her little nose as she giggles. “Is Mother on the way?”

Blessed Lupercal, let the earth swallow me whole.

Hannibal has a family. All this time, Hannibal’s been playing mind games with Will, soothes him, caresses him, seems to *care* about him in an over-friendly way, and he has a *family.*

A gorgeous family, too, because his daughter’s eyes are bright and sparkling, hair smooth and straight under her wide-brimmed hat, smile ripped from pristine portraiture. Will aches from her beauty, from the desperate need to nurture that surges through him at the sight of an Alpha and his child.

“Excuse me,” and Will jumps, turning toward the sudden voice behind him. Yet another plastic suit worn by a woman with faraway eyes, flowing blonde hair, and a moue of distaste. “Hannibal,” she says, giving Will the once-over from beneath her dramatic purple hat, “are you going to introduce us?”

“No need.” Will’s dogs have started pulling him down the path in a wild attempt to put space between their alpha—*You aren’t the alpha male,* says a voice in his head that sounds suspiciously like Hannibal—and the vampire family. “I was just leaving.”

The last thing Will sees before he turns around to keep from tripping over Zoe is Hannibal kissing the woman’s cheeks, then looking wistfully over her shoulder at Will.

Chapter End Notes

Any excuse for a Homestar Runner reference. Trogdor says trans rights!

[runs off to next chapter with consummate vees]

Chapter 3

Will blinks his eyes, face upturned, seeking the moon, and he finds it, staring back. His muscles ache like he's been running, which isn't possible since—

Sky. He shouldn't be able to see the sky, not if he's—

Wrists. They're—his arms, they've—

"Careful," and the voice sounds familiar, sounds *safe,* much safer than the clinking of iron chains and the burn of silver manacles. "Easy. You've had quite the adventure tonight."

Will opens his mouth; it fills with blood and he panics, whines. "Shed," he manages with gurgling gasps, secondary lenses shifting back and forth across his eyes like strobes. "The shed."

"Yet here you are, dear boy." Arms tighten around Will's body, and a hand grips the fur on the back of his head, pushing and tilting his face away from the moon. "Eat," the voice says, and Will smells blood, but no life. Meat, but no movement.

"Good scent." Will nuzzles into an open wound big enough to cradle his head. "Hungry," and he is, has been for *years,* denying himself, now waking into a feast. "Hunt."

"Yes," says the voice, "you did an admirable job finding your way home and to me." The voice trembles as Will mouths the flesh before him, testing the give of it with his teeth. "Such a pity Frederick got away. Then again, this way, you're all *mine."*

Will's chest tightens. He wants to be someone's, to be accepted into and run with a pack family, to follow a leader he trusts and who cherishes him.

"Alpha." It feels *right,* for whoever this is to be his Alpha. Will knows in his gut he belongs here, eating the dead, chewing skin and bone, gnashing his teeth and growling at the sinew stuck between them.

"Alpha." The voice sounds like moonlight feels, heavy with awe. Will's head is held fast, not that Will had any intention of leaving the gruesome warmth of bleeding decay. "Nourish yourself," Alpha urges. "Eat your fill. No harm shall come tonight."

Will gulps and gorges until the feast is all he knows.

Time passed in fits and spurts. Will could see the moon, when they looked for each other, fuller and higher in the sky, his blood singing the She-wolf's praises. The cool night air and

the snowflakes hitting his snout didn't stand out to Will, not like the snippets of hushed conversations that occasionally piped into his ears.

"I need to know you have the situation under control. We can't have him running around the neighborhood howling all night!"

"You've no need to worry yourself." Will tilted his head into the hand combing through his fur. "He's well fed, and I've—"

"Oh, trust me, I'd noticed. You look as bad as I do after a good shamble."

"If you could refrain from interruption in the future, Frederick, it would be appreciated." Their voices diminished as Alpha proffered a vein to Will's teeth; Will sank them in immediately.

Another time, Will stirred in a soft nest, the kind of burrowed bedding he was no longer used to. Thin, deft fingers fiddled with the locks on his manacles, and the silver *burned,* pushed harder against Will's wrists.

"He tried to bite me!" someone shouted, barely audible over the snapping of Will's jaws.

"Unintentional, I'm sure," said Alpha. "It is Will's animal nature, just as the night is ours."

"The last time someone tried to bite me, we ate him."

"Hush, Abigail." Alpha's voice was powerful, persuasive and alluring. "One never knows who may be listening."

"If he gets any closer to your ears, *Dad,* it won't be you." A shriek, and then Alpha's hands clamped Will's muzzle shut as he tried to bite the visitor's hands again. "I'll be happy when Bedelia shows up with the keys."

"As will I, mažylis. As will I."

There were others, too, voices that didn't carry over the sound of meat in Will's ravenous maw. Not until a woman said, "He's bit off more than you can chew, Hannibal," did Will's hind brain begin to shift the pieces together.

Alpha. Hannibal. Dr. Lecter.

And then hunger, once more.

Will mumbles a thank-you at the ceramic mug of—he sniffs deeply—outrageously expensive, single-sourced coffee placed in front of him. Not to the cold, svelte woman who set it down; he's still mad at her, mostly for being the doctor's wife, not that Will cares or—

“We aren’t married,” she says haughtily. “Cain forbid. Being his Sire is unfortunate enough.”

And Will has questions. *So many questions*. He takes a sip of his coffee, and it’s delicious, making the fur stand up on the back of his neck.

“You’ll have to thank him for that. I couldn’t operate that monstrosity of a machine if someone else’s life depended on it.”

“I don’t know who you are," says Will, "but please stop reading my thoughts.”

“Bedelia Du Maurier.” She shrugs, disturbing her obnoxiously perfect hair. “Force of habit. I bore easily.”

“Everything bores Bedelia.” The young girl from the park sticks her head around the door frame. “Sorry, I mean *Grandsire,”* and she rolls her eyes, dipping back out of view. Will hears music start up in the next room, a beat-thumping, orchestral blast over the dull whine of speakers.

Bedelia groans. “Billie Eilish. Again.”

“She speaks to my *soul!”*

“Which you do not have.” Bedelia shoos Will away from the table. “Hannibal’s on the porch. I’ve done my good deed for the day.”

Will bristles at being dismissed, but he’s as fond of her as she seems to be of him. It’s Hannibal he wants to interrogate, anyway. Hannibal who, as Will stumbles outside, sits on a —“Is that a shrink couch?”

He waits for a rebuttal, then steps closer, all the way around him, and realizes Hannibal’s throat is *gone.* Hannibal’s head is barely supported by an antique medical brace, the base of which rests on the bare bone of his scapula. Everywhere Will vaguely remembers feeding from is oozing blood, ravaged, open and pustuled.

It’s Buster’s leg all over again, but so, *so* much worse. Will feels ill, even beyond the malaise of his heat.

Hannibal beckons him closer, and how could Will not go? How can he resist the call of this utter creep who sacrificed his flesh to the whims of Will’s appetite? More endearing than unsettling, this strange man, the lone survivor of Will’s primal intimacy.

“I’m—” Will shakes his head. “She-Wolf’s breath, apologizing seems useless.” Will sits beside Hannibal on the couch, body still post-shift clumsy. The coffee cup slips from his fingers, shattering on the tile of the porch, contents splashing onto his legs to singe in yet-to-shed fur.

Hannibal grabs his hand before Will can try to apologize again. When Will meets Hannibal’s eyes, they’re bloodshot-bright, and Will sees the red ring of the moon in them. He squeezes Hannibal’s hand and is rewarded with a tired smile.

Warily, before he can think better of it, Will tells him, “Come on into my skull. The water’s fine.”

The effect is immediate, electric shock zinging across Will’s brain, making his ears ring, momentarily erasing his keen senses. **I was unaware you were an omega wolf,** says Hannibal. **Your scent betrayed nothing, and you are a man, so I thought you an Alpha like me.**

Will feels like he’s staggeringly drunk. “You didn’t know I was trans? Wait, you didn’t know there are no cis male omega wolves, at all? You didn't know I was in my heat? You didn’t know *anything?”*

In hindsight, I should have consulted Abigail before pursuing a courtship.

“You’ve been *courting* me?” Will can’t keep up with the sudden glut of information, and he shakes his head to try and quell the static of the mind link. “So what, do all vampires court their intended by annoying the shit out of them?”

The Old Ways require overt shows of dominance, given that we are all Alphas. Abigail tells me I’m unfashionable in such regards. Hannibal looks down at their joined hands. **I fear dynamic education courses came well after my time.**

“You’ve not been mocking me? Not for either gender?”

I could never, not even had I known.

Will rubs behind his twitching ears with his free hand. “Then why were you such an asshole in the park?”

You mentioned your partner, and I assumed you meant romantically, not a coworker. Abigail informed me otherwise.

“Has Abigail also explained that you’re a tremendous idiot?”

Muscles re-knit themselves beneath Hannibal’s jaw. **It may have been mentioned in passing, yes.**

Will gazes across the backyard, at the topiaries with their blood-black roses and the moss-covered fountain, brimming with snails and decay. He watches the two dogs bask in the sun, more cat than canine. From inside the house, Will hears the muffled sounds of familial bickering. The whole scene feels terribly domestic and normal, and She-Wolf knows how Will has missed normality.

Stay with me for the rest of your shift? Hannibal asks, his voice still irritatingly confident. **I will not take advantage of your heat, merely provide safety and shelter.**

Both the omega and wolf in Will whine at being told to *stay* by an Alpha, to be kept *safe* by an Alpha, never mind a family den.

At least you will not be forced into self-imprisonment. Unless, of course, you wish the return of your keys and chains.

Will sighs. “You’ve got me there.”

They sit in silence for a while, listening to someone bang around in the kitchen, watching what Will assumes to be dragon fire in the distance, given all the sudden sirens.

“Hannibal?”

“Yes?” His voice is grainy, like a bad recording of a vinyl album.

“Did you really name your dogs after mythical Japanese swords?”

Hannibal coughs; viscera lands on his pajama pants. “They’re dignified.”

“And you’re pretentious.”

“We must be what we are, no matter the cost.” Hannibal glances at Will knowingly, warmly, happily. It makes Will’s stomach flop and sets his senses tingling.

Well, he thinks. *Fuck.*

End Notes

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